



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER  
NANCY FLOREEN

**Comments to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission  
National Association of Counties Legislative Conference  
March 5, 2007**

**Good Morning, I am Nancy Floreen, an At-Large member of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of its Transportation and Environment Committee. I also serve as Chair of the region's Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee. I really appreciate this opportunity to address you on the critical issue of transportation funding and policy from the County perspective. I have spent much of this winter testifying in support of transportation financing plans at the state level. That is because the lack of adequate federal dollars for basic infrastructure is hitting us hard at every level of government. However, it is at the county level where the rubber hits the road hardest, where congestion has its most immediate impact and where the cost of transportation solutions has been increasingly shifted.**

**I am here to make some comments on two points relevant to your Commission's charge.**

**First, I understand one of your members suggested in a public forum that "there is nothing wrong with the transportation funding challenge that a 50 cent gas tax wouldn't fix." Our County Executive and the County Council in Montgomery County, Maryland, have gone on record supporting a gas tax increase for transportation funding at the state level. No doubt we would support it at the federal level also if we could be assured that it would fund our local transportation needs. While tolls and public-private partnerships, HOT lanes and the like have gained a lot of currency lately, I would point out to you that they have limited applicability to maintaining and upgrading our arterial roads, intersections, and transit systems. These concepts, while appropriate for some major new freeway projects – can be a distraction from the non-sexy – some might even say – boring – core governmental responsibilities I face.**

**We still need a tremendous amount of resources to help localities solve their overwhelming transportation infrastructure obligations. I encourage you to consider, at the very least, indexing the gasoline tax to reflect past and future inflation as a step toward moving us forward.**

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**Second, our County has two projects gearing up to compete for the federal “New Starts” transit funding program. Serving a very populous area in the Washington Metropolitan region, we are third in the nation in traffic congestion. So we are committed to transit solutions. However, I am told by Ronald Kirby, Director of Transportation Planning for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, that the Federal Transit Administration’s requirements concerning the use of its “Summit” model in evaluating transit projects are extraordinarily onerous, and have some limitations in assessing transit benefits. I urge you to look into this problem.**

**We hope that your review of SAFETEA-LU will address the need for fair distribution of scarce federal transit dollars under criteria that are clear and understandable, and take into account all transit benefits as well as regional and local differences.**

**Thank you very much. Please let me know if I can provide you with any further information.**

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